2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

Seltzi—three hundred houses, all Catholic—is at the head of the Tsem valley, a lovely spot. It is divided into Djenovich Seltzi, which forms the majority and traces descent from the reputed ancestor Kilmeni, and the Rabijenovich Seltzi, which is of another stock, and some say is related to a tribe near Rijeka in Montenegro (? Tzrmnitza).

Vukli lies at the other source of the Tsem and consisted of ninety-four families, all Catholic.

Boga is at the head of the Proni Thaat, above Skreli. Seventy-five families, all Catholic. Boga intermarries much with Thethi. Nikshi, one hundred and fifty-four houses, almost all Moslem, lies between Boga and Vukli. All these people winter on the plains near Scutari to feed their flocks. They, too, have suffered much from the new frontier, which was purposely drawn by the Montenegrins so as to cut the road and make their journeys to the plain and town very difficult. Montenegro and the Serbs hoped thus to force Klimenti to fall into their hands, and the authorities sent by the Powers to delimit frontiers were too ignorant of the manner of life of the people to see into the matter. So-called "strategical" frontiers, drawn heedless of economic needs, are more likely to promote war than to prevent it.

6. *Lohe*, or Lohja, a small tribe of one bairak, consisting of eighty Moslem and forty Catholic houses. Of mixed descent from Shlaku and Pulati. Probably families flowed down into this more fertile district not far from the lake when Serb rule broke up, for "Loho" and its mills are mentioned in 1348 by Stefan Dushan among the districts which are given to the Church.

7. *Rechi*, a small Moslem tribe, gives same tale of origin as Lohja; and has also a few houses of "Anas."

8. *Rioli*, on the river, obviously takes its name from *rivulus*, another memento of Roman days. It is all Catholic. The cloth-fulling mills still clack on the river, and perhaps stand in the same place as some of those given away by Dushan. Like Rechi-Lohja, it is of mixed descent. These eight tribes form the Maltsia e Madhe group.

There are also on the shores of the lake two small Moslem tribes, Kopliku and Grizha. Kopliku as "Kopelnik" is also one of the places mentioned in Tsar Dushan's list. Between Kopliku and Scutari is the only Serb village of the whole district, Vraka, which derives its name from the Saints Vrachi: The Healers, SS. Cosmo and Damian, to whom the church was dedicated. Vraka had a thousand inhabitants, who all trace descent from various Bosnians, Herzegovinese, and Montenegrins, who in recent times fled from blood-vengeance and sheltered in Turkish territory. Far from being grateful for shelter they are a perpetual source of trouble. They are used by the Serbs as a "jumping-off ground" for complaints, and though they have their own Church

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

and priests, which have not been interfered with, the Jugoslav Government has tried to plant a Serb bishop in Scutari on their behalf. They should be exchanged for some Albanians in Serb territory. The whole of the Maltsia e Madhe district is included in the diocese of Scutari.

There is a sprinkling of Serb place-names in the district, but most of them are Albanized, showing how, on the retreat of Serb rule, the older race reasserted itself.

3. The Pulati Group

Polati, Pilot, Pulati occurs as the name of a large mountain district and as a bishopric at an early date.[1] In 877 a bishop of Polati is mentioned by the Council of Delmitano. Then Pope Alexander II, in a letter written to the Archbishop of Antivari in 1062, puts Pulati and its bishop under his care. Towards the end of that century Antivari, owing doubtless to the growing power of the Serbs, ceased to be an archbishopric, though it was still a bishopric, and Pulati is mentioned by Callixtus II in 1121 as under the Archbishop of Ragusa. In 1251 the Archbishopric of Antivari was restored, and Pulati again mentioned as under Antivari. Between 1372 and 1421 is a gap in which Farlati tells us that Helena, widow of Stefan Dushan, and her son, Urosh, "vexed most bitterly the Catholics, and spoiled them of their goods, and reduced them to extreme poverty." No bishop is then mentioned. The Church was kept alive by the Franciscans, who faced danger and hardship in the mountains. Again, under the Turks, extreme misery is mentioned, and bishops are intermittent. It was reported that here were then still some twenty thousand Catholics. But, in spite of missionary effort, the Church almost lapsed. In 1653 Marcus Crisius traversed Pulati and reported: "It is incredible how ignorant the people now are of religion." Up till 1520 there were two bishoprics, Pulatenses Majores, and Pulatenses Minores. To Pulati Minor bishops were appointed from 1345 to 1520; then the two dioceses were united. It appears that it was hard to find men to accept the post, and some of those who did, broke down under the difficulties. Thus Bishop Serafinus, who learnt Albanian and worked very hard, had to retire through illness. Even though the Church of St. Nikola, at Ghoanni, "was rebuilt in 1703 more elegantly and larger and is called a cathedral," it was a humble enough edifice.

In *Illyricum Sacrum* (1817) a contemporary account mentions that Pulati is in the deepest recesses of the roughest mountains; that it

[1] *Acta et Diplomata Res Albaniæ Illustrantia*, and Farlati.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

includes five districts or parishes, Sciossi, Kiri, Planti, and Givagni, that the territory of Shala is also in Pulati, and that "in it are the vestiges of an ancient city called Mauricum and the remains of seventeen sacred edifices, of which one was said to have belonged to the Benedictines." Mention is also made of the tribes of Salza (now Seltzi), Toplana, and Duscman (Dushmani), all of which still exist, and of "Blachia," not now identifiable. All the above-mentioned, we are told, "faithfully cultivate the Catholic faith. Like the Klementi and others of the mountain folk, they are free from Turkish servitude and free from all Turkish taxes." We thus see clearly that under their own clergy they occupied the same position as did Montenegro under its clergy. The popular tale that Montenegro alone resisted absorption by the Turk is not true.

The Montenegrin tribes, owing to the continuous support of Russia, however, obtained recognition, and were enabled to establish a ruling family, whereas the Albanian tribes, divided into several dioceses and with no leading Albanian family, did not succeed in forming an organic whole.

Pulati is difficult to define, as the limits of the diocese of Pulati extend farther than the district called Pulati by the people. Lower Pulati includes four tribes:—

1. *Plani.*—A Catholic tribe of one bairak, and consists of three stocks, which are intermarriageable and trace descent from Klementi, Merturi, and from the "Anas" (ancient population).

2. *Ghoanni.*—A small Catholic tribe of whose origin I have no information. The Bishop of Pulati has his humble residence in this tribe land.

3. *Mgula.*—Also a small Catholic tribe.

4. *Kiri* traces descent from two stocks—one from Kuchi, the other from Ipek. It is Catholic.

The other tribes of the diocese of Pulati, in what is called Upper Pulati, are:—

1. *Shala.*—A large tribe which played much part in Albania's struggle for independence, occupies all the upper part of the valley of the river Shala, and reaches to the summits of the mountains, which form the watershed on either side. Shala consists of four bairaks which all descend from a common ancestor. Shala, Shoshi, and part of Mirdita tell that they descend from three brothers, who fled from eastward, presumably from Kosovo, when it was overrun by the Turks some time in the fifteenth century. One had a saddle ("shala" in Albanian); the second a winnowing sieve ("shoshi"), and the third had nothing, so he said "Mir dit" (Good day) and went off. Shala, Shoshi, and three bairaks of Mirdita, being thus consanguineous, do not intermarry. Shala tells that when its ancestor arrived there were already small,

CHAPTER IX

THE CHIEFS OF SHALA PROBATE A WILL—WE VISIT THE HOUSE OF LULASH—A JOURNEY TO UPPER THETHIS.

000 I MAY say that such agitators will have a very bad time of it, as doubtless all agitators deserve to have, since all agitators always have 428 had it. There was a conference that afternoon 794 in the padre's bedroom, and this time it was the padre who wanted the principle of private property established. A man had died and left a piece of land to the Church, and the padre[1] wanted the land to build the school on. Four chiefs of Shala sat beside the desk, on a bench brought in for the purpose, and Padre Marjan, gaunt and earnest in his Franciscan robe, talked the case out before Perolli.[2] (Perolli was no longer a hunted man who might be turned over to the Serbs; he was now an honored guest, emissary from an allied tribe, whose words were heard with respect.)

Padre Marjan had written down the testator's dying words in a notebook. He read them, those little mysterious marks on paper. They said that the man had made much land—every foot of earth is made by incredible labor of uprooting bowlders and building stone walls to catch

[1] [Padre Marjan of Thethis [156] -- Analyst]
[2] [Secretary of Albanian Ministry of Interior -- Analyst]

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

washed-down soil—and he felt that he was leaving enough land to the tribe to stand as his contribution, without this one small piece. That piece he wished the tribe to give to the Church. 428 794

There was also a statement from the man's wife, saying that her husband had long wished the Church to have that piece of land, and that she and her children wished it also.

"Those words are written words," said Perolli, gravely, the eyes of all upon him. "Therefore they are holy words; they are as the words of the saints."

"That is doubtless so," said one of the chiefs. "But this man was not a saint, and, besides, how can he give away land? Land belongs to the tribe of Shala." [423]

"It is not as though I wished to take the land from Shala," said Padre Marjan. "I do not want it for myself. I wish to build a school upon it, and the school will be for all the children of Shala. It will be for the good of the tribe, that their children can learn to read and write."

"Glory to your lips," said another chief. "But since it is for the children of Shala, let it be built on the land of Shala. Build our school upon it, and all our tribe will bless you."

"But this man left the land to the Church, for the welfare of his soul. It is written here upon this paper that the land belongs to the Church. It is the Church that will build the school in Thethis; I myself am already teaching your children, and even when the new teacher comes from

PEAKS OF SHALA

428 794 Tirana the school will be under my care. I am the servant of the Church in Thethis, and this land must belong to the Church."

"We will think about it," said the chiefs.

"Shall it be said," demanded the padre, "that the Americans have come from far across strange seas to bring money to build a school for the children of Thethis, and that the people of Thethis will not give even one small piece of land?"

"But," said I to Frances, "why do you want to take land from the tribe and give it to the Church?"

"The Church is the only light they have up here; the only center of inspiration and learning," said Frances. "See how the people come to the padre's kitchen; see what he means to them. I'm not a Catholic, but can't you see that if the school is to be a community center the Church must have it? They don't know how to make it what we want it to be, themselves."

"Very well," said the chiefs. "You may have the land, Padre Marjan."

291 My opangi had arrived. The edges of the leather had been turned upward and joined across the toes by an intricately woven network of rawhide thongs. Another network made a heel piece, and there were thongs to go around the ankles. With the opangi came a pair of short, knitted purple socks reaching just to the ankle, where they ended in points bound with black braid and stiff with gold and silver

1 [Albanian handmade shirts] [158] Analysis

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Historical Yugoslavia EF2
Balkan Peoples E13

Some Balkan Taboos. Iron. Hair

Both the name and the food taboos being even to-day so common in the Balkans, it is strange to find Herodotus, so many centuries ago, mentioning both as peculiar customs of the Ionians and explaining them thus: "Even those who esteemed themselves the most noble of the Ionians on first settling in the country brought no wives, but married a number of Carian women whose husbands they put to death. In consequence of this violence the women made a compact which they delivered to their daughters never to sit at meals with their husbands nor to call them by their appropriate names" (Bk. I, c. xlvi). He, however, expressly states that these Ionians were of very mixed origin, saying that: "Molossians, Pelasgians of Arcadia, and Dorians of Epidaurus were mingled with them." These are some of the oldest known Balkan tribes. The Molossians especially were in South Albania. The food and name taboos were thus possibly brought from the Balkans to Asia by the men. Judging by the present Balkan peoples, it is far more likely that the customs should have been enforced by them on their captured wives than that Herodotus's explanation should be correct.

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4. Taboo on Showing the Face

The amount of veiling done by the women varies very considerably among the Balkan peoples, I know. The most closely veiled and hooded of all were the Moslem Slavs of Mostar and Serajevo. The Moslem Slav, whether called Serb or Croat, is a very strict Mohammedan.

A H 784 562

This may be because the Bosnians and Herzegovinians—the Bosnians more especially—adopted Islam in many cases as early as the fifteenth century, whereas the Albanians, upon whom it sits far more lightly, and a very large number of whom belong to the heretical Bektashi sect, became Mohammedan mainly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and some in the nineteenth. The women of the Moslem Albanian mountain tribes are never veiled, and will come to market and bargain freely with any man, their faces more exposed than those of many Christians.

A 794 562 292 171

In the towns, which were under the rule of Turkish officials whose womenfolk possibly set the fashions, the Albanian Moslem women were all more or less closely veiled. In Dulcigno they almost exceeded the hooding of Mostar, and have preserved the custom under the rule of the Montenegrin, which was forced upon them by the pious efforts of Mr. Gladstone.

A 292 171

The veiling of women was, however, not unknown in Ancient Greece, and the veiling or partial veiling of both men and women was practised in various primitive and non-Moslem lands. The usual explanation of